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The Nest of Many Colors

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Mr. and Mrs. Oriole arrived from the South one bright day in May. They had had a pleasant journey, but were glad to find themselves once more at the old summer home - the great elm tree which stood on the top of the hill and swung its branches over the farmhouse in which Ned and Kitty lived. You would never have thought that those two birds had been traveling hundreds of miles if you had seen the way they darted about, Mr. Oriole's yellow feathers showing like flashes of sunshine as he flew swiftly past.

The two birds were very happy to be back and had so many things to do that they had no desire to sit still! Mr. Oriole wanted to see the Robins and Bluebirds and all the other friends who had arrived and to get the spring news. He also wanted to see the Pigeons and hear how the winter had gone with them. But Mrs. Oriole was anxious to get to nest-building at once.

"My dear mate," said she, "you know how much material it takes to make a nest and how much work it is to weave it. Help me first to collect some things for weaving. There will be plenty of time for visiting later."

"But if we go to the barn where the pigeons are, perhaps I can get you some of those long hairs which are so good for weaving," suggested Mr. Oriole.

"Oh! Good idea, let's go" said Mrs. Oriole; and away they went.

Now, while the orioles had been chatting together, Ned and Kitty had been watching them with great delight. Ned could not remember seeing the orioles last year, but Kitty, who was older, felt that she had known them a long while, for she had watched them build their nest several times.



This year, the children had a great plan. Kitty had thought of it one day when she was crocheting, and she had saved some pieces of bright worsted which she had at first thought of throwing away.

"The orioles will soon be back," she had said; "I may as well keep these worsteds. It will look good in their nest!" After this, she had saved other pieces, and now had a bright bunch of red and orange and yellow and green and blue

and purple; and she and Ned had planned that the oriole nest this year should be the most gorgeous that was ever woven.

When Mr. and Mrs. Oriole returned from their visit to the barn, they were very happy, for they had each found one of the long hairs from the farm-horses' tails! Kitty and Ned slipped away from the bushes near the elm tree just in time. They had spread some bright red worsted out in plain sight and now stood in the doorway watching.

The birds brought the hairs to the branch and then spied the red worsted on the bushes below.

"We can get to work very soon if we have such good fortune as this," chirped Mrs. Oriole. "Now let's go and find one of those plants which have such good stalks to tear strips from."

Mr. Oriole agreed, and the two flew away again. They found the plant they wanted and tugged away with their beaks and their claws till they each had a good long strip. They flew back to the elm tree again and on the same bush where the red worsted had so mysteriously appeared, were now some orange and yellow strands.

"Quick! Quick!" called Mrs. Oriole in great excitement. "Let's get that, too! I must begin to work immediately."

And begin she did, while Mr. Oriole fluttered about, — sometimes helping, sometimes looking on, and often bursting into joyous song.

Ned and Kitty watched, as long as they could see, and wished that the leaves did not hide the little weaver. Every day after this Ned and Kitty put more worsteds out on the bushes — green, and then blue, and then purple — until all their colors were used.. Day after day they worked busily and happily; and the strips torn from the plants, the long wisps of hay, the worsteds and the horsehair were woven together and soon took shape as a nest.

It was wonderful how cleverly the little birds managed and how patiently they worked. The long strips caught and tangled on the twigs of the tree sometimes, and sometimes the wind carried off a whisp of hay just when Mrs. Oriole was going to weave it; but the two weavers chirped and twittered happily the whole time.

After a week, the happy day came when the nest was finished. How safe their little home was! No eggs could fall out of such a deep nest as this. No rain could get through its thin but closely woven sides to chill the eggs or the baby birds. And what could be more delightful for the little ones than the swaying, rocking motion which even the slightest breeze would give to this high swinging home?



The worsteds which Kitty and Ned had supplied made brilliant spots and bands of color such as had never been seen before in the nest of a bird.

"See! See! See!" caroled Mr. Oriole as he flew round and round the nest in ecstasy. "It is as beautiful as a flower garden! It must be those wonderful strings which we found on the bushes below which make it so beautiful."

"Flower garden, do you say?" sang Mrs. Oriole. "There are colors more dear and beautiful to me than the bright flower colors. That soft green reminds me of the leaves which rustle about our home and shade it and hide it. But this little spot right here, my dear, is what I most rejoice to see; not because it is like yellow flowers or sunshine, though it is like both; but because it is the color of your own golden, bright feathers. I remember well when I wove that string into the nest."

While the orioles were rejoicing over their beautiful home, Ned and Kitty, with their mom and dad, were looking up at the completed nest. They were filled with wonder and delight.

"Who would ever think that such a beautiful and perfect thing as that was made without hands and without tools?" said father.

"I am so glad I saved the worsted!" said Kitty. "I will put some out every spring."

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